United Nations E/CN.6/2007/NGO/6

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
5 January 2007

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women
Fifty-first session
26 February-9 March 2007
Item 3 (a) (i) of the provisional agenda*
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": implementation of strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives: the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child

Statement submitted by Centre for Women, the Earth, the Divine, European Union of Women, Hadassah-Women's Zionist Organization of America, International Council of Jewish Women, International Council of Women, International Federation for Home Economics, International Federation of Business and Professional Women, National Council of German Women's Organizations, Pan Pacific and South-East Asia Women's Association of Thailand, Salvation Army, Servas International, Socialist International Women, Soroptimist International, Third World Movement against the Exploitation of Women, Women's Federation for World Peace International, World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

* E/CN.6/2007/1.

06-66580 (E) 260107

Statement

The role of men and boys in achieving gender equality

We, the undersigned international and national non-governmental organisations in consultative status with ECOSOC, members of the Vienna NGO Committee on the Status of Women, present to the 51st session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women the following statement for information and consideration:

In agreement with the Commission on the Status of Women in its agreed conclusions of the forty-eighth session, we consider the role of men and boys to be vital for achieving gender equality. We also recall and again welcome the outcome document of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, which emphasized that men must take joint responsibility with women for the promotion of gender equality.

The discriminatory barriers and practices some men and boys face, prominently mentioned by the Commission in the text of the Agreed Conclusions, however, have their foundations in the patriarchal system itself and thus cannot be accepted as excuses for the prevailing imbalances of power and rights. Inherent to this prevailing patriarchal system is the lack of social competence of men and boys on the one side and the undervaluation of many types of work, abilities and roles associated with women on the other side. We therefore consider education as essential for men and boys to understand their responsibilities in the promotion of gender equality and to enable women to achieve the full enjoyment of women's human rights. The essential role of the media in such educational programmes must be acknowledged.

- Education of men and boys in social competence will increase its visibility and contribute to its societal acceptance and validation. Education of boys - beginning at a very early stage – in tolerance and mutual respect will help them to better understand their future roles as partners, fathers and caregivers;

- Education of men and boys in safe and responsible sexual and reproductive behaviour and in the use of effective methods to prevent unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS, is of utmost importance and should be made compulsory;

- Education of men in order to increase their acceptance of zero tolerance against all forms of violence against women and children, including trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation, forced marriages and forced labour, the exploitation of women and girls as sexual objects and commodities, and the use of pornography.

The undersigned NGOs welcome the Commission's statement in the Agreed Conclusions on the role of men and boys in achieving gender equality that resources for gender equality initiatives for men and boys should not compromise equal opportunities and resources for women and girls.